

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00420 222114Z  
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
TRSE-00 /063 W  
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R 221641Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
TO \*SECSTATE WASHDC 4178  
INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 420

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT NS  
SUBJ: JAVANESE POLITICAL LEADER RELEASED FROM PRISON

1. AMIDST SPECULATION THAT HE WOULD ATTEMPT SOME TYPE OF POWER PLAY AGAINST THE ARRON GOVERNMENT, FORMER AGRICULTURE MINISTER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE JAVANESE-BASED INDONESIAN FARMERS' PARTY (KTPI) WILLY SOEMITA WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON MARCH 17 AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS ONE-YEAR SENTENCE FOR BRIBERY IN CONNECTION WITH A LAND SCANDAL IN SURINAM'S WESTERN NICKERIE DISTRICT EARLY IN 1977. HOWEVER, IN KEEPING WITH WHAT IS PROBABLY A REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF HIS ACTUAL POWER AT THIS MOMENT, SOEMITA INSTEAD SUMMONED THE PARTY FAITHFUL

WHO, AFTER ACCLAIMING HIM AS STILL THEIR LEADER, APPROVED A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THE KTPI'S PARTNERS IN THE NPK GOVERNMENT COMBINATION. RANKING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER PARTIES IN THE NPK (EXCEPT FOR THE PROGRESSIVE SURINAM PEOPLE'S PARTY WHICH WAS HOLDING PARTY ELECTIONS) ALSO ATTENDED THE MASS MEETING HELD MARCH 19, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT MINISTER CAMBRIDGE (FROM ARRON'S SURINAM  
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NATIONAL PARTY, NPS) AND LABOR MINISTER PARMESSAR (CHAIRMAN OF THE HINDUSTANI-BASED REFORMED PROGRESSIVE PARTY).

2. THE DISPLAY OF KTPI UNITY AND SOLIDARITY WITH ITS GOVERNMENT PARTNERS WAS MARRED ONLY BY THE ABSENCE OF KTPI MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT RAMIN AMAT,

WHO APPARENTLY REFUSES TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH SOEMITA OR HIS AMBITIONS, AND IS CONSIDERED BY MANY AS A RIVAL FOR THE KTPI CHAIRMANSHIP. AMAT WAS ONE OF THE TRIUMVIRATE OF KTPI LEADERS WHICH RAN THE PARTY DURING SOEMITA'S INCARCERATION AND HAS REMAINED ALOOF FROM PRO-SOEMITA SENTIMENT. AS A RESULT, SOEMITA'S THEORETICAL POWER TO BRING DOWN THE ARRON CABINET BY WITHDRAWING THE SUPPORT OF THE THREE KTPI MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (WHERE THE NPK GOVERNS WITH ONLY A 22-17 MAJORITY) IS IN FACT CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE LIKELIHOOD THAT AMAT WOULD NOT COOPERATE AND THE NPK WOULD RETAIN AT LEAST 20 VOTES. IN FACT, EVEN IF AMAT WERE TO COOPERATE IN ANY SUCH MOVE BY SOEMITA, THE KTPI WOULD RUN THE RISK THAT ARRON'S NPS AND OPPOSITION GEADER LACHMON'S UNITED REFORM PARTY (VHP) WOULD GET TOGETHER AND FORCE ALL THE SMALL PARTIES INTO THE OPPOSITION.

3. THE JAVANESE COMMUNITY IN SURINAM, COMPRISING ABOUT ONE-SIXTH OF THE POPULATION, IS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE. IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO WIN LAST OCTOBER'S ELECTIONS, BOTH MAJOR PARTIES (THE NPS AND THE VHP) COURTED THE TWO CONTENDING JAVANESE-BASED PARTIES (SOEMITAS KTPI AND THE PENDAWA LIMA) WHO DIVIDE THE JAVANESE VOTES ALMOST EQUALLY. THE JAVANESE BARGAINED HARD

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WITH THE RESULT THAT IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT WHICH CAME INTO OFFICE IN DECEMBER THEY HAVE EIGHT OF THE 39 SEATS (1 NPS, 3 KTPI, 4 PENDAWA LIMA). A FAVORITE PASTIME OF POLITICAL PROGNOSTICATORS HAS NATURALLY BEEN TO CONJECTURE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE JAVANESE UNITED AND CONTROLLED A SOLID BLOC OF SEVEN OR EIGHT VOTES IN PARLIAMENT. THEORETICALLY THIS WOULD GIVE THEM TREMENDOUS LEVERAGE OVER ANY GOVERNMENT OR PROSPECTIVE GOVERNMENT BUT IN REALITY BOTH MAJOR PARTIES REALIZE THIS AND WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO WORK TOGETHER THAN TO SUBMIT THEMSELVES TO JAVANESE DOMINATION.

4. NONTHELESS, SOEMITA REMAINS A POLITICAL FIGURE TO BE RECONCILED WITH AND ONE WHO WILL WATCH CAREFULLY FOR ANY OPPORTUNITY TO RESCUE HIS TARNISHED IMAGE AND REGAIN THE INFLUENCE HE PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED. THE NPS KNOWS THIS AND WILL LIKELY SEEK TO AVOID ANY ACTIONS WHICH WOULD PULL AMAT TO A RECONCILIATION WITH SOEMITA, WHILE SOEMITA WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH EXACTLY THAT. SUCH A SITUATION DOES NOT AUGUR

WELL FOR THE FIRM OR STABLE GOVERNMENT, BUT OVER THE  
PAST TWO YEARS WE HAVE SEEN THAT IN SPITE OF SUCH  
DARK OMENS, ARRON HAS SOMEHOW MANAGED TO HOLD THE  
REINS OF POWER TOGETHER, AND HE APPEARS CONFIDENT  
THAT HE CAN CONTINUE TO DO SO FOR THE DURATION OF  
HIS CURRENT FOUR-YEAR TERM.  
ZURHELLEN

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL LEADERS, PRISONERS RELEASE, POLITICAL SITUATION  
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